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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2008

In Today's Papers

The Most Critical Presidential Election in American History (Vatan)

All media outlets still predict an Obama victory in today's U.S. presidential election, and anticipate a new phase in American history. Islamist-oriented Zaman carries the headline, "The World Holds Its Breath as Obama Gets Closer to the Presidency," and speculates "Obama, who seeks to change the traditional line, could bring a breath of fresh air to foreign policy." Mainstream Sabah carries the headline, "The World's Eyes are on This Election." Mainstream Milliyet reports, "The U.S. Elections Could Change History," as "The Dream Comes True." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "The U.S. Faces a Test in the Election of a Black President." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak carries the front page headline "The Fateful Day," and reports, "If McCain is elected, the only result is the continuation of Bush's policies." Leftist Taraf calls today "A Revolutionary Day in America." Economic daily Referans carries the headline, "Either Obama Will Win or There Could Be a 'Racist' Miracle."

Editorial opinion on U.S. Elections

Murat Yetkin wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "The new American president will immediately be part of the system even before the inauguration ceremony; therefore there is a strong chance that PM Erdogan will meet with the new president during upcoming G-20 talks. Following Ambassador Wilson's rightful explanation to President Bush about the seriousness of the PKK situation, Washington decided to give active support to Turkey last November. At that time, the U.S. also supported the newly-elected Erdogan government. Erdogan will now be the key figure in the new era of Turkish-American relations as the only legitimately elected leader of the only democratic and secular country in the Muslim world."

Tamer Korkmaz wrote in Islamist-leaning Yeni Safak: "There is a chance the United States will lean toward rational policies, particularly in the Middle East, if Barack Obama comes to power. Of course if Obama is elected it still remains to be seen to what extent the 'American deep state' will let him proceed on his own accord. The United States, under a new leader, will make gains if

it abandons its policy toward world hegemony. Otherwise the United States will continue to be a loser."

Erdal Safak wrote in mainstream Sabah: "There are rumors that Obama will withdraw US troops from Iraq immediately, freeze sanctions against Iran, engage in close cooperation with the EU and open a brand new page with Russia. Don't believe these rumors. American national policies do not always change with the election of a new president. Nevertheless, Obama has millions of fans all over the world, including Turkey. If he wins, one must simply enjoy the pleasure of a change."

Can Dundar wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "There is no doubt that an Obama victory will bring many political results. But, from a historical perspective, the most important point is that a black person can become president in a country where, half a century ago, white women were not allowed to marry black men. This is really good news for people who believe that communities can eliminate bigotry and prejudice in order to find the rational path."

Ambassador Wilson Offers Reassurance Regarding Elections.  
Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports in "Either Way, Turkey Will Win," that U.S. Ambassador Ross Wilson spoke to journalists following his farewell call to the Istanbul Governor Muammer Guler. Wilson emphasized, "No matter which candidate is elected, there will be strong and positive relations between the U.S. and Turkey."

The Duchess of York Stirs Diplomatic Tensions  
Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, has created a tense controversy in Turkey after revealing her undercover photos of orphanages in

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Turkey including Saray orphanage on the outskirts of Ankara. The photos were published in the Sunday Daily Mail\* last weekend and a documentary will be aired on ITN November 6th that details horrifying conditions, including children screaming for attention, patients fed while lying down, patients eating their own feces, and patients tied to their beds. Mainstream Vatan newspaper accuses the Duchess of "offering donations to convince orphanage officials to show her the worst parts of their facilities." Islamist-oriented Zaman carries the headline "Sarah Ferguson's Hidden Intentions," and notes, "State Minister for Women and Children's Affairs Nimet Cubukcu accused Ferguson of attempting to harm Turkey's image at the same time the EU Commission is preparing a report regarding Turkey's progress toward its EU bid." In "The Duchess Crisis," mainstream Sabah reports, "The English Duchess created diplomatic tensions between the UK and Turkey when she took secret photos," and notes, "The British Foreign Ministry said Ferguson's opinions were not official," and "do not represent the views of the UK." Mainstream Aksam, meanwhile, calls the Turkish government's response to the photos "buffoonery" because "the government launched diplomatic complaints with the UK before they launched an investigation into the conditions in the orphanages." Liberal Radikal also criticizes the Turkish government by saying, "Turkey cares more about its image than the problems in orphanages." Radikal also notes that a 2005 report by Mental Disability Rights International documented the poor conditions at the Saray orphanage, calling the conditions "tantamount to torture."

Government under Fire for Rising Gas Prices

All papers gave prominent coverage to the recent 22.5 percent increase in natural gas prices. Minister of Energy Guler, in a press conference held with Saltuk Duzyol, the chairman of BOTAS [Oil Pipeline Corporation], said that all pricing processes are determined by an automated pricing mechanism in which neither the government nor BOTAS has a direct impact. Papers note that after the natural gas price hike, a rise in electricity prices is also expected.

Derya Sazak of Milliyet points out, "Turkey has become one of the few countries in the world with record high natural gas price. The government has to come to its senses eventually and should cancel the price hike." Erdal Saglam of Hurriyet holds PM Erdogan responsible for the price hike, "Due to the AKP government's populist policies and political decisions, the high profit-making BOTAS has turned into a deficit-making corporation. The natural gas

price increase is a clear demonstration of the mismanagement of the economy."

Cartoon from today's edition of mainstream Sabah entitled "After the Natural Gas Hikes."

DTP Slams PM Erdogan for His Remarks in the Southeast  
During his trip to the largely Kurdish Southeast of Turkey over the weekend, PM Erdogan angered many Kurds when he said, "Those who reject the concept of one flag and one nation are free to leave and go anywhere they want," which many media outlets translated as "Turkey - love it or leave it." In response yesterday, Ahmet Turk, Chairman of mostly pro-Kurdish opposition DTP, posed a sharp question to the PM "Who will expel whom from whose motherland? This country and its flag are common values of the Kurds, Turks and all other segments of our society."

Six Prison Guards Charged in Ceber Torture Case  
Mainstreams Sabah and Milliyet report six prison guards from Metris prison were charged by the court in connection with the death of Engin Ceber in Metris prison last month. 19 guards were detained for torturing and killing Ceber in prison and six of them were formally charged yesterday.

Life Is Hard for Women in Turkey  
Milliyet, Sabah, Aksam, Posta, Radikal, Zaman, Cumhuriyet, Hurriyet

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and others: Today's papers report on the investigation the Justice Ministry has initiated into a medical report that lead to the release of extreme Islamist Vakit columnist Huseyin Uzmez from jail.

Uzmez was detained last April on charges of repeated sexually assault against a 14-year-old-girl. Uzmez is awaiting trial, but was released from jail last Tuesday because the Council of Forensic Medicine's report indicated that the 14-year-old assault victim's physical and mental health was stable and therefore not affected by Uzmez's alleged assaults.

Mainstream Milliyet and others note that there are plenty of similar cases in Turkey and the life is becoming harder for women in Turkey day by day. Papers point to the latest rape incident in Sivas as an example. A 16-year-old girl in Sivas refused to marry a 32-year-old man chosen by her parents. The girl became a rape victim after her parents invited their chosen husband-to be to their home and locked him in a room alone with their daughter. The girl was then raped by the man and later beaten by her family in order to convince her to marry him. The girl filed a legal complaint and the parents and the rapist were arrested.

TV News  
Domestic

- The DTP completes its sit-in protests in Diyarbakir.
- Zahid Akman, Director of the Radio and Television Board (RTUK), said he was ready to publicly discuss the graft allegations against him, which were brought up by CHP deputy Kemal Kilicdaroglu.
- Consumer prices increased by 2.6 percent in October.

International

- Total spending for political campaigns in US presidential elections nears \$1 billion.
- The Iraqi Parliament approves legislation restoring guaranteed seats on provincial councils to Christians and other small religious communities.
- Palestinian President Abbas is en route to Romania for a two-day official visit.

WILSON